

Precinct Reporter

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Community Action Poverty Symposium Held at SBVC

By Eliz Dowdy
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The Community Action Partnership, America's poverty fighting network, in collaboration with other entities in the San Bernardino Valley hosted a poverty symposium recently.

The event did not consist of a high profile group of elite professionals coming in to tell the community what it needs to do, but those already in the trenches in the community working to improve life for all the residents. It was an audacious call for the end of poverty in the communities of San Bernardino County, not by the waving of a magic wand, but through the concerted efforts of a plethora of community-based organizations pooling their expertise and working for a common goal.

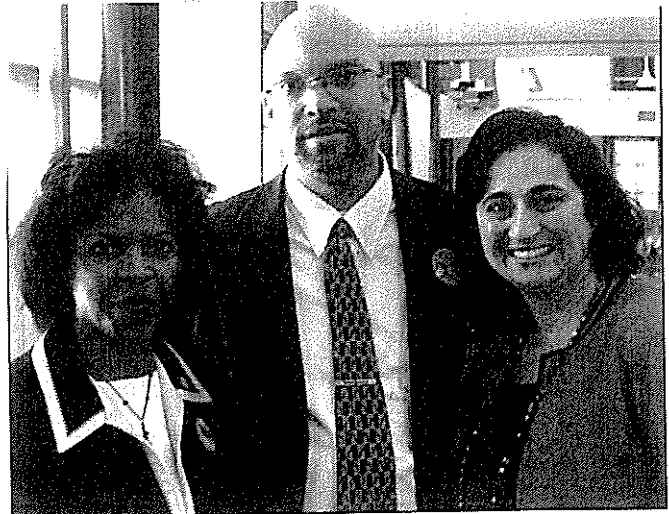
The morning began with the welcome by Al Twine, chairman of Community Action Board, and Denise Whittaker, president of San Bernardino Valley College. Patricia Nickols, executive director of Community Action Partnership, stated the purpose of the symposium.

Other morning speakers included Dr. Herb Fischer, Superintendent, San Bernardino

County Schools; Josie Gonzales, Board of Supervisor, Fifth District, and Dr. John Husing, Jr. Inland Empire economist. The program then moved into the panels phase. There were five categories of discussion: Education, Employment, Health, Housing, and Crime Prevention/Rehabilitation.

All of the panelists on those discussion groups were local, and included Dr. Matthew Issac, district director, Professional Development Center; Dr. Don Averill, Chancellor, San Bernardino Valley College; Dr. Margaret Hill, interim assistant superintendent, County Superintendent of Schools, and Dr. Mildred Henry, CEO, Provisional Accelerated Learning (PAL) Center. Other panelists were Sandy Harmsen, Workforce Development Department; Dr. Juan Carlos Belliard, associate professor Global Health, Loma Linda University; Daniel Nackerman, director, Housing Authority of San Bernardino County, and Chief Jim Bueerman, Chief of Police, Redlands Police Department.

Each discussion group stated what they are currently doing and how their curricula may expand to assist larger numbers. For instance, Dr. Hill stated that of every 1000



Patricia Nickols (left), Executive Director of Community Action Partnership of San Bernardino County, is shown with Gerald Brown of her agency and Gloria Alfafati of San Bernardino Valley College. Photo: Coleman



Dr. Margaret Hill (left), San Bernardino County Schools, and Dr. Mildred Henry, Provisional Accelerated Learning, Inc., served as panelists at the Poverty Symposium. Photos: Dowdy



Lois Carson